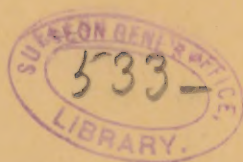


# Hog Cholera.





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From the LANSING REPUBLICAN, November 18, 1880.

At the last meeting of the state board of health, Dr. H. B. Baker, secretary of the board, was directed to investigate the hog cholera now prevailing in the southwestern part of this state, and to find, if possible, any relation between that disease and any sickness in the human family. In pursuance of that order Dr. Baker visited Vicksburg in Kalamazoo county, Mendon and Wasepi, and their vicinities in St. Joseph county, and Climax and Leroy in Calhoun county, pursuing his investigations more particularly in the latter township. The statements given below are the conclusions arrived at by Dr. Baker from a collation and comparison of facts obtained, sometimes with the greatest difficulty, in the localities above named, as many of the people do not recognize the disease as hog cholera, and in many instances were unwilling to furnish any information, or aid in an investigation.

The disease prevails in all the above-named localities, and the general impression seems to be that it is spreading east and north. This chances to be in the direction of the prevailing winds, and some are of the opinion that the winds favor its spread. It should be remembered, however, that inasmuch as the disease first struck the southwestern part of the state, if it spreads at all in Michigan it must necessarily be in that direction. Still the theory of spread by the wind is worthy of consideration, especially as the cause is known, and appears to be capable of being carried as dust by the wind. Another thing, previously known, was that the disease is communicable. It has also been ascertained that it could be communicated to mice, sheep, and chickens, and from each of these back again to the swine, although the disease affected sheep but slightly. Dr. Baker has found evidence in his recent investigations that it may also be communicated to rats, dogs, lambs, colts, and cats.

### NATURE OF THE DISEASE.

The term "cholera" is a misnomer except as it conveys an idea of a communicable disease. Contagious typhoid pneumonia would more nearly represent the nature of the disease, but both those terms would probably be misleading unless the mode of communication of the disease is understood, which is by inoculation or by taking the specific virus into the body with the food. It is possible that the disease may be communicated by inhaling the poison, but of this there is not sufficient evidence.

The time which elapses after the entrance of the poison before the disease is noticed is about seven days, but it varies considerably, possibly depending upon the amount of poison introduced and the susceptibility of the system to it. Young animals are most susceptible, and the mortality is greatest among them. The evidence of this was very marked in Dr. Baker's investigations. This is exactly analogous to the communicability of diseases which affect human beings, such as scarlet fever, measles, diphtheria, etc. some of those who had observed the disease in Leroy township thought it was certainly diphtheria of the hog. Dr. Baker found in other places mention of swelling of the throat and difficulty in swallowing. Post mortem examinations did not reveal signs of diphtheria, however, but did reveal evidence of hog cholera.

### THE SYMPTOMS

described in various places varied greatly, but are all easily explained when the nature of the disease is understood. The specific virus circulates through the body wherever the blood goes, and very rapidly reproduces itself. It tends to clog up the smaller blood-vessels throughout the body, and especially in any weak or injured place; therefore the symptoms necessarily differ widely, but the lungs almost uniformly suffer, becoming clogged up in nodules or by entire lobes, in many instances causing death in this manner. Another part of the body next most constantly affected is the large intestine and

small intestine near it. Where the glands on the inside of the intestine are enlarged and sometimes ulcerated and inflamed, the adjacent lymphatic glands are enlarged, and the stomach is sometimes inflamed. In one case Dr. Baker noticed enlarged spleen, and the liver had a peculiar purplish appearance. Others have found similar appearances.

From this description it is easily realized that there is not much hope in medicine being able to eradicate the disease, but as a matter of fact the

### FARMERS ARE IMPOSED UPON

all over the country by quacks, and are trying all kinds of remedies. But what is found to answer in one case will not work in the next, indicating that there is no reliance to be placed upon remedies. On the contrary it is productive of much mischief, as the attempt to keep the animal alive only tends to increase the cause of the disease. Intelligent men say if they had killed all the first animals attacked and placed them four feet under ground it would have been money in their pockets by preventing the spread of the disease; but the question of its restriction is very complex, because of its existence among almost all classes of animals, and perhaps in human beings.

### NOT RECOGNIZED.

Dr. Baker says the disease is not generally recognized by the people where he went. They say, when the cats have a disease which appears to him the same, that it is consumption. When the dogs had it it was "dog distemper;" when the colts had it it was "epizoötic;" and when the lambs had it, as they did in some places, they attributed it to feeding on clover, or called it "grub in the head," and cited for proof the fact that after death the "grubs came out of the nose;" but this might occur in summer after death from any disease. The disease is probably spread very largely by mice, rats, and cats, which die and lie around unobserved, and to which chickens and hogs have access.

The question which Dr. Baker was especially requested to investigate, whether this disease is

### COMMUNICABLE TO MAN,

is attended with much difficulty, because in the neighborhoods where it exists the people are very much afraid, and avoid contact with the disease or eating the meat; but at nearly every point they ship animals of this character, and purchasers only require that the animal shall be alive when put on the cars. They go from there to Chicago, Detroit, and perhaps to other places, and the difficulty lies in deciding just which pork belongs to animals of that kind. One reason prompting this investigation was that sickness, and in one case death, was attributed to eating sugarcured ham in which careful search proved the absence of trichina. It has been found that

### THE POISON OF THE DISEASE

is somewhat easily destroyed, but whether meat from animals that have died of this disease is capable of conveying the disease to human beings who eat it as it is ordinarily prepared is a question of very great importance, but one upon which conclusive evidence cannot yet be obtained. Dr. Baker found one place where the first animals known to be sick were two cats. The next were the chickens, which died very rapidly, and the next was the man of the house, whose symptoms, as described, were not very different from those of the animals. The next were the hogs, not all of which were dead at the time of the doctor's visit. One was killed, and a post mortem revealed hog cholera, every point being verified under the doctor's eyes. At the time of this visit a son, the only male member of the family remaining, was sick. Whether his sickness bore any relation to the other disease it will be impossible to say, if he lives. Should he die, post mortem might determine the point. Further investigation will be greatly facilitated if persons having any knowledge of this subject will kindly communicate it to the secretary of the state board of health.







